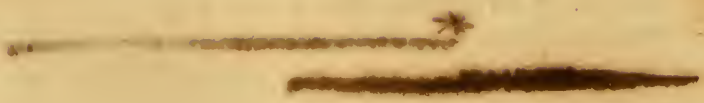
1 Scott's Rights of God.
2 Miller's Fast Sermon. Yellow Fever
3 Dwight on Goodrich.
4 Morse's Masonic Sermon.
5 W. Whorley's Missionary Sermon.
6 Rodgers on Witherspoon.
7 Pearce at the Ordination of Belcher
Kirkland on Belknap
8 Osgood on Phophecies.
9 Lumbulls Ordination Sermon.
10 Emmons's Ordination Sermon.
11 Calvin on James.
12 Stevens's Ordination Sermon.



(9)

The Duty of Miniſters to be nurſing Fathers to the Church; and the Duty of Churches to regard Miniſters as the Gift of Chriſt:

Sam. Miller

A CHARGE,

DELIVERED BY

The Rev. JOHN RYLAND, D. D. of Briſtol;

AND

A SERMON,

DELIVERED BY

The Rev. S. PEARCE, M. A. of Birmingham;

IN THE DISSENTERS MEETING-HOUSE,

ANGEL-STREET, WORCESTER;

at the

ORDINATION

of the

The Rev. W. BELSHER,

To the Paſtorate of the Baptiſt Church,

MEETING IN SILVER-STREET, IN THE SAME CITY:

Together with

An Introductory Addreſs,

By the Rev. G. OSBORN,

AND ALSO

Mr. Belſher's Declaration of religious Sentiments.

Sold by BUTTON, London; BASKERFIELD, Worceſter; BELCHER, Birmingham; and JAMES, Briſtol.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Meeting-Houſe of the Baptiſt Society, in Silver-ſtreet, Worceſter, being now rebuilding, they have for the preſent agreed to aſſemble for public Worſhip, with their Friends and Brethren in Angel-ſtreet; where the following very pleaſing and inſtructive Services were attended on the 7th of December, 1796:—and the common Friends of chriſtian *Love* and *Order* have requeſted this Publication, as exhibiting an amiable inſtance of both. May it prove a mean of mutual Comfort to the Churches, and of Edification to the Public!

Worceſter, December 30, 1796.

The Order of the Service.

Mr. T. EDMONDS read a portion of Scripture, and prayed;

Mr. OSBORN delivered the introductory Discourse;

Mr. L. BUTTERWORTH asked the usual Questions respecting the Church's free Choice of Mr. BELSHER to the pastoral Office, and his willingness to accept the same; which being recognized,

Mr. BELSHER read the Declaration of his religious Sentiments;

Mr. L. BUTTERWORTH committed him and the Church to the Divine Blessing, by prayer;

Dr. RYLAND delivered the Charge;

Mr. PEARCE addressed the Church, and concluded the Service with prayer.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

WHAT a pleaſing ſight is this day preſented to you, my brethren and friends, in this place! Children of one family, acknowledging one Father, and uniting our chriſtian affections and efforts, for the ſtability, order, and uſefulneſs of the church of Jeſus, and its miniſters! By particular deſire I am called upon, juſt briefly to introduce this ſolemn ſervice, and to aſſign our reaſons, as Proteſtant Diſſenters, for ſuch an obſervance. It is needleſs, perhaps, to inform this auditory, that we do not find in the word of God, any poſitive command for us formally to ordain: —that we do not pretend to any ſuperior or ſpiritual authority over each other, as miniſters of the ſame goſpel:—and that we openly profeſs we can neither communicate, nor receive from man, any extraordinary gifts. We believe (with good Mr. Henry, on 1 Tim. i. 12) "that "putting men into the miniſtry, is the work of JESUS "CHRIST:"—that he is the ſupreme and only lawgiver in the church;—that ſcripture alone is our rule;—and that private judgment is ſacred in religion. While, therefore, as to *civil* government, and the *lawful* authorities of our country, we are frank to declare our ſincere allegiance, and not only *in words*, but in affection and *conduct*, "to render "unto Cæſar the things which are Cæſar's:"—we are bound in conſcience, as to the things of God, to "call no man maſter upon earth." Yet, though we are obliged to diſallow and reject the impoſing dominion of any Lord-biſhop, or of any Lord-brother, in the preſcription of our faith or worſhip; yet we allow, and wiſh to obſerve, the propriety of religious ſervices, in reiigious concerns: And therefore,

therefore, according to ſcriptural example, and apoſtolic practice, we are met together this day, to help each other by our mutual prayers and advice, to *recognize* the ſolemn deſignation of our brother to the work of the miniſtry, and the intereſting relation now avowed, between him and his friends in this city. Were I to chuſe a text to ſanction our practice, I ſhould fix your attention on the apoſtle's account of a primitive ordination, conformable to divine appointment, as you have it recorded,—

Acts xiii. 3,

WHEN THEY HAD FASTED AND PRAYED, THEY LAID THEIR HANDS ON THEM, AND SENT THEM AWAY.

In this buſineſs there was no myſtery, no ſuperſtitious right, no ceremonious pomp, no uſurpation of prelatical authority: but there evidently appears great ſimplicity; pure devotion; love of order; ſubmiſſion to divine teaching; and true benevolence to men.

I. Conſider here who were the ordained, or what is the eſſential character, and neceſſary qualification, of chriſtian miniſters? Plainly there were no prerequiſites of human greatneſs; no heights of ſcientific attainments; no attachments of wealth or intereſt: but there were previouſly beſtowed, and perſonally enjoyed,—

1. *Moral goodneſs*;—that is to ſay, the men ſet apart for this evangelic work, were well acquainted with the things of religion. They knew and felt the evidences and truths of the goſpel. Their hearts were renewed by divine grace; and their lives correſponded with their profeſſion and hopes. They were men of faith, of purity, of devotion, and of love unfeigned, both towards God, and the world: and ſuch excellence of moral character, we deem eſſential to the being, and the acknowledgment of every miniſter, and paſtor in the church of Chriſt. So

Paul

Paul directs, 1 Tim. iii. 2, &c. " A bishop (or as rendered Acts xx. 28, overseer) must be blameless; the husband of one wife; vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient; not a brawler (or fighter) not covetous."

2. *Spiritual gifts*, though not miraculous, nor equal in all, yet are most important qualifications for every christian minister. As he cannot be a christian without moral goodness, so he cannot be a minister, a teacher, or pastor, without suitable endowments. Here we think it indispensible that there should be a sound understanding; an acquaintance with natural and revealed religion in its doctrines and requirements; an ability to lead the devotions of the people; a capacity for learning; and an aptitude and power to instruct, persuade, and comfort.

3. *Disinterested zeal* for the glory of God, for the edification of the church, and for the good of all mankind; this also is a most capital requisite in the ministerial character. This zeal is equally remote from selfishness, the love of ease, worldly ambition, and overbearing officiousness. Where those qualities are found and cultivated, we suppose there is every thing essential, especially when combined with human prudence, for the discharge of the ministry.

II. Observe, in the next place, who were the *ordainers*, and how did they ordain, or separate for the work of the gospel? It is said " There were in the church (*i. e.* the society of believers) " at Antioch, certain " prophets and teachers; and as they ministered to " the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate " me now Barnabas and Saul, for the work where-

" unto

"unto I have called them: and when they had "fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them, "and sent them away: so they being sent forth by "the Holy Ghost, departed." Hence we learn, that divine influence was the prime mover, the call, and the commission of these persons. We learn that they were expresly set apart by their brethren, and *fellow members* of the church: and that this was attended simply by fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands: *i. e.* not the hand of *one man*, as having any peculiar jurisdiction or gift, but the hands of several good men, who united their hearts and actions, as the servants of God, and the organ of the society's good will. In like manner we would infer, and observe the will of God, calling our brethren to the ministry, and us to set them apart.

1. *From the direction and leading of Providence.* It is God who raises up and qualifies his servants: he fixes their habitation; he inclines their hearts to engage in his work; he directs the attention of his people; and while he calls them to his service, promises and affords all needful supplies of wisdom, strength, and encouragement. See Jerem. i. 4—8. 2 Cor. ii. 14—16.

2. By the free *choice of the people* themselves, we look upon ministers as called, and pastors as *virtually* ordained. For we must bear in mind, that such a service as this gives no fresh ability to our brother: Barnabas and Saul were eminent ministers of the gospel, *before* this separation: and all intended by us, who unite in the work of this day, is, solemnly to recognize the calling of our brother, as the object of his friends election and confidence.

3. By solemn *acts of devotion*, therefore, we conceive that we equally comply with the example of scripture—

the

the declared will of God—and the wiſhes and feelings of his people in this matter. As to faſting and prayer, perhaps their union on this, as well as on other occaſions, would be found peculiarly ſuitable and uſeful: certainly there is the greateſt fitneſs and beauty in commending the miniſter of Chriſt to his ſpecial influence and bleſſing. And as to laying on of hands, it ſeems to me both highly proper, as the mark of concurring in this *deſignation*; as well as the original mode of intreating the divine benediction, upon particular perſons. Vide Gen. xlviii. 14.

Such, brethren, are our views of *evangelical* ordination. We only deſire to follow ſcripture direction and examples. We venerate the rights of conſcience, and of Chriſt. At the ſame time we cordially wiſh well to all that love the goſpel, however they may differ from us: and I ſincerely ſay may peace and holineſs be promoted by us all.

MR. BELSHER'S DECLARATION OF HIS *RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS.*

AFTER a ſerious and repeated peruſal of the holy ſcriptures, earneſt prayer for divine direction, and mature deliberation, I feel myſelf at liberty, with inward ſatisfaction, to ſtate, without reſerve, my views of religious truth, and I now declare my faith.

I. In the being of a God. In every direction I meet with evidence of his exiſtence and perfections. The magnitude, variety, and harmony of creation—the preſervation of the world—the pleaſing viciſſitude of the ſeaſons—the

wiſdom and deſign that appear in the diſpenſations of providence—the excellent ſtructure of the human frame—the amazing powers of the immortal ſoul—with the pleaſures of holineſs, and the miſeries that attend on moral evil—all theſe loudly proclaim his power and godhead.

II. Though the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſheweth forth his praiſe, *yet* he has magnified his word above all his name. In creation, we perceive the operation of almighty power and infinite wiſdom: In Providence, unſpeakable condeſcenſion and unremitting care: But in revelation we learn his moral character: In the law appear unſpotted holineſs, and inflexible juſtice: In the goſpel, ſovereign goodneſs, and unbounded love! The doctrine of the croſs is repreſented as a mirror, in which the perfections of God are to be ſeen to the greateſt poſſible advantage; there, "as in a glaſs, we behold the "glory of the Lord;" for Chriſt is "the image of the "inviſible God." Nature's diſplay of God is partial—Revelation exhibits him "in all his round of rays compleat." Through the ſacred humanity of our Lord, the divine perfections are ſoftened down in a manner ſuited to our feeble capacity; and inſtead of exciting terror, encourage hope. Here the ſinner may be taught what he can learn no where elſe, a juſt God and a Savior; the inflexible judge, and compaſſionate father; the doctrine of remiſſion, acceptance with God, the ſure and certain hope of a glorious reſurrection and bliſsful immortality. From the ſublimity and excellency of the doctrines; the grace and glory of the promiſes; the freeneſs of the invitations; the purity of the precepts contained in the writings of the Old and New Teſtament; connected with the holineſs and agreement of the inſpired writers; the accompliſhment of prophecy; the diſperſion and preſervation of the Jews; the evidence of miracles, and the aſtoniſhing influence of ſcripture doc-

trines

trines (through divine agency) upon the minds of men, I believe the Bible to be the word of God. The ſacred pages, whoſe divine authority is ſupported by this body of evidence, I conſider as entitled to our deepeſt reverence and moſt cordial affection; and receive this divine directory as an infallible guide of faith and practice; "to which "we do well to take heed, as to a light to that ſhineth in a "dark place."

III. I believe God to be a ſocial being, "the Father, "the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt; the three who bear re-"cord in heaven." The ſame in eſſence, equal in majeſty and glory. My inability to comprehend this doctrine, is no more an objection to its truth, than my not being able to comprehend my own being, is an objection to the reality of my exiſtence. If I cannot comprehend my own exiſtence, how, by ſearching, ſhall I find out God!

IV. I believe, in oppoſition to the doctrine of chance, that the events which take place in the natural and moral world, are objects of the divine purpoſe or decrees. "He "worketh all things according to the counſel of his own "will." The purpoſes of God I conceive to be ſovereign, though not arbitrary; that is, without reaſon: They are infinitely wiſe and good; for if God purpoſe or decree, he muſt decree and act like himſelf—an infinitely wiſe and gracious Being. From the word of God I learn that believers are the objects of Jehovah's eternal choice. "God "hath from the beginning, choſen you to ſalvation through "ſanctification of the ſpirit, and belief of the truth." Faith and obedience, I conſider, as the effects, and not the cauſe of our election. "As many as were ordained to "eternal life, believed." "According as he hath choſen "us in him before the foundation of the world."

V. I believe that God created the firſt man Adam ſuperior to all other creatures on earth; being endowed with a rational and immortal ſpirit; for "the Lord God "breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life, and man be- "came a living ſoul"—The underſtanding was as clear as the light—the will pure and holy—the affections kept in due ſubordination—the memory, retentive—the conſcience, peaceful and ſerene: This is to be made in the image of God, and after his likeneſs in the higheſt and moſt proper ſenſe. In this ſtate of rectitude, man had the law of God written in his heart; in addition to which he received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil: and upon his attention to, or violation of this injunction, depended his enjoyment of God, or loſs of happineſs.

VI. As Adam was the firſt man, ſo I believe him to be the covenant head, and repreſentative of all mankind, and that the conſequences of his obedience or diſobedience, did not merely extend to himſelf as an individual, but to all his poſterity; wherefore, by his apoſtacy, he not only brought himſelf under the awful penalty of Jehovah's law, and loſt the image and favor of God; but tranſmitted to all his deſcendants univerſal corruption and depravity, with the proſpect of everlaſting woe. "By one man's diſobe- "dience many were made ſinners."

VII. Man having deſtroyed himſelf, I believe God was pleaſed to reveal his purpoſe of grace and mercy, made with Chriſt the covenant head of his people, before the commencement of time; which "covenant is ordered in "all things and ſure;" and ſecures free pardon, full ſalvation, perfect righteouſneſs, the promiſe of the ſpirit, and final glory to every believer. To realize this merciful deſign, in the fulneſs of time the Son of God became incarnate, aſſuming human nature, with all its ſinleſs infirmities, as

neceſſary

neceſſary to conſtitute him an able and ſuitable Savior. This intereſting truth is declared to be without controverſy the "great myſtery of godlineſs: God was manifeſt in "the fleſh."

Our Lord was not only made under the law, but by his holy life and vicarious death, he magnified and made it honorable: he has ſatisfied the demands of juſtice; glorified the divine character to the greateſt poſſible degree; made an end of ſin; and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs. On the croſs he ſpoiled the powers of darkneſs, and ruined the empire of Satan. He was buried, and on the third day he roſe ſuperior to death and the grave: he aſcended into heaven, to receive the honors due to his victories; to poſſeſs the reins of univerſal government; and to prepare manſions of bliſs for all his followers.

VIII. I believe that all who are intereſted in the undertaking and work of the Redeemer, are, by the powerful influence of the Divine Spirit, called from darkneſs to light; from ſin to holineſs; from Satan to God. Their underſtandings are illuminated; their wills renewed; their affections ſanctified; and in all their powers devoted to the Lord; being "created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, "which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk "in them."

Faith and repentance are bleſſings of the new covenant, and are implanted in us by the power of the Divine Spirit—By faith we embrace the Savior, and build our hopes upon him for forgiveneſs, acceptance, and eternal life—Repentance is that grace by which we are diſpoſed to abhor ourſelves, and determine no longer to live in the indulgence of ſin—It teaches to deny ungodlineſs, and perfect holineſs in the fear of the Lord—Faith and repentance

pentance never fail to produce good works; naturally "having their fruit unto holineſs."

Effectual calling and juſtification, I believe are inſeparably connected—"Whom he called, them he alſo juſtified." Juſtification I conſider as a complete acquittal from imputed and contracted guilt: a deliverance from the deſtructive and condemning power of ſin:—but our works or obedience have no meritorious influence on our acceptance with God, either in whole or in part; ſince we are juſtified alone by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed and received by faith.

All who are juſtified, are taken into the family of heaven; enjoy the bleſſings of grace; are the objects of divine love, and unremitting attention—they are the care of Providence, and the charge of angels. By virtue of adoption, they have a right to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away—they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt—Jehovah himſelf is their portion and reward.

Thoſe who have received grace, will be crowned with eternal glory—the love, promiſe, wiſdom, honor, and power of Chriſt, induce me to believe this comfortable truth, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Chriſt."

IX. Chriſtians, uniting and agreeing to walk together in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; to ſtrengthen each others hands; to bear each others burdens; and promote each others beſt intereſt; do conſtitute a goſpel-church, of which Chriſt is the only head and Lord; ſo that whoſoever exalts himſelf, and preſumes to take part in the dominion with him, is no other than Antichriſt, invading

vading the Redeemer's prerogative, and lording it over God's heritage—" One is your maſter, even Chriſt, and " ye are all brethren."

X. Baptiſm, and the Lord's-ſupper, are poſitive inſtitutions of the goſpel diſpenſation. The ſcriptural mode of adminiſtering the former, I apprehend, to be by immerſion. The latter, I conceive, is deſigned to preſerve alive an affectionate remembrance of the love, ſufferings, and death of our Lord.

XI. At death our bodies will return to the earth, and our ſouls aſcend to God, to receive an immediate and unalterable ſentence to eternal life or death—to be admitted into heaven, or ſent down to hell.

I believe that God has appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteouſneſs by Jeſus Chriſt; when the awful trumpet ſhall be blown, and its alarm diſturb the ſlumbers of the dead. Thoſe who have done evil ſhall come forth to the reſurrection of damnation; thoſe who have done good to the reſurrection of life everlaſting. " Depart ye curſed," will fill the ſinners heart with terror and deſpair; while thoſe who have believed in the Savior, ſhall be cloathed with the garments of ſalvation, and admitted into the paradiſe of God—" Come ye bleſſed of my " Father, enjoy the kingdom prepared for you from before " the foundation of the world."

A CHARGE,

A CHARGE,

&c.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

AS I am called, by your own requeſt, to addreſs you, on the preſent ſolemn, but pleaſing occaſion, permit me to turn your attention to a paſſage, which appears to me well adapted to impreſs our minds, with ſome affecting and intereſting ideas, juſtly applicable to the work of a Goſpel Miniſter, and a Chriſtian Paſtor.

The expreſſion to which I allude is contained in

NUMB. xi. 12.

—THAT THOU SHOUD'ST SAY UNTO ME, CARRY THEM IN THY BOSOM, AS A NURSING FATHER BEARETH THE SUCKING CHILD, UNTO THE LAND WHICH THOU SWAREST UNTO THEIR FATHERS.

THESE words are included in a complaining addreſs, which was made to the Lord by Moſes, in an hour of ſingular trial; when he was ready to conclude, that a taſk had been aſſigned him, too difficult for him to execute; ſo that he almoſt preſumed to remonſtrate with Jehovah concerning it: yet they contain a charge, which he acknowledged had been virtually, if not verbally, given him by the God of Iſrael; and which is couched in language beautifully deſcriptive of the nature and importance of his commiſſion, and eſpecially expreſſive of the greateſt tenderneſs for Iſrael.

This

This charge, my brother, appears to me as juſtly applicable to our employment, as to that of Moſes; though our ſphere of action is leſs extenſive, and our buſineſs more entirely ſpiritual. God is now no leſs careful of the ſouls of his people, than he was then, of the concerns of Iſrael after the fleſh: and it ſurely requires as much attention, fidelity, and tenderneſs, to conduct chriſtian pilgrims through a wilderneſs world, to a heavenly Canaan; as to guide the deſcendants of Abraham, to the earthly inheritance, promiſed by oath to their fathers. He who, in the days of old, conducted Moſes and his people, and put his Holy Spirit within him, that he might act as the ſhepherd of his flock, has given as ſtrict an injunction, and as gracious encouragements, to thoſe whom he has made overſeers of the church, which God our Savior has purchaſed, with his own blood.

Seaſons of trial may occur, in which we may be tempted to complain, that our work is too heavy for us, and that we cannot bear the weight of the people alone; but then, to reflect on the far heavier trials endured by this man of God, who had the care of a whole nation, for forty years together, may tend to check our readineſs to repine.—With what ingratitude did he meet, from thoſe whom he brought forth out of the houſe of bondage? How deeply were they infected with the idolatrous cuſtoms of the Egyptians? How often did they murmur againſt Moſes, and againſt God? How did they ſlight the manna which came down from heaven, and was daily ſpread round their tents; while they luſted for the fiſh, the cucumbers, and the melons, the onions, the leeks, and the garlic of Egypt: and for the ſake of ſuch ſenſual gratifications, were ready to return to the land of oppreſſion, and deliver themſelves again into the hands of their cruel taſk-maſters? We cannot juſtify the impatience of Moſes, but we may well

acknowledge that far leſs trials would tempt us, to adopt the worſt part of his language, and that we ſhould be ready to aſk God to kill us out of hand, that we might not ſee our wretchedneſs. But under the worſt of our diſtreſſes, the divine injunction he quotes in our text, may prove ſome antidote againſt the dejection he expreſſes in the context: and a recollection of the Lord's indulgence and compaſſion, manifeſted on this occaſion, may operate as a farther means of counterbalancing our burdens.

Moſes himſelf, when his mind was freed from extraordinary perturbation, could not but acknowledge the loving kindneſs and compaſſion of the Lord, both to himſelf, and to Iſrael; the commiſſion here given him was highly honorable to himſelf, as well as expreſſive of Jehovah's pity for his people: and though the execution of it was arduous, ſuch aſſiſtance was afforded him, both *mediately* by the aſſiſtance of the ſeventy elders (verſe 16, 17, 24) and *immediately* by the ſupply of the divine ſpirit, that Moſes was enabled to diſcharge his office with comfort and credit; and having brought the choſen tribes to the borders of their promiſed inheritance, and enjoyed the ſight of the good land from the top of mount Piſgah, he entered into eternal joy.

The ſame joy, my beloved brother, is ſet before us; the ſame grace is ſufficient for us; let not the greatneſs of our work diſcourage us, nor the proſpect of difficulties, ſimilar to his, diſmay us; but let us regard the language of the text as the commiſſion given us by the divine Redeemer (who bought us, and our dear people, with a price angels cannot compute) ſaying

Carry this people *in thy boſom, as a nurſing father beareth the ſucking child, unto the land*, which is ſecured to them by the oath of God.

As

As your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom, and patience of Jesus Christ, I invite you to join me in serious meditation, on this memorable day, wherein you have taken the over-sight of a church of Christ.

First. Upon the *nature of our charge*, as represented by this descriptive language.

Our charge is *real* and *divine.* We were neither of us constrained by human authority, nor engaged by human persuasion, to enter on the work of the gospel ministry: we entered upon it voluntarily. And the particular post you now occupy, was not allotted you, by any earthly superior, by any patron, presbytery, or prelate, but you willingly acceded to the free invitation of the Baptist Church in this city. We have both professed that it was in obedience to a divine call, we undertook to preach the gospel; having been inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit, who excited us, from love to Christ, and from compassion to perishing souls, to desire this good work. In this way, a necessity has been laid upon us, and *Woe unto us, if we preach not the gospel.* We know that the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal; and having received gifts, of whatever degree, from the head of the church, woe unto us if we hide our Lord's talent as in a napkin, and do not *occupy till he shall come.* To him must we give an account of our stewardship, who hath entrusted us with the mysteries of God; knowing that as every man hath received this gift, so must he minister the same unto others, as a good steward of the manifold grace of God. And as the same God, who called us to this work in general, hath, by the guidance of his Providence, allotted to us our particular stations, we cannot interpret the combined language of his word and providence, respecting the

people of our charge, as amounting to leſs than this, Carry them in thy boſom (as a nurſing father beareth his ſucking child) unto the promiſed land.

Our commiſſion, my brother, is *extenſive* and *particular*. Not like that of Moſes indeed, comprehending the concerns of a nation, nor connected with any right to intermeddle with the ſecular affairs of our people: It is confined merely to their ſpiritual intereſts. But in that reſpect it extends not merely to the communicants, belonging to our reſpective churches, that have elected us to the paſtoral office; but to all who are connected with them, or to whom we can have acceſs by their means; to their children, their ſervants, their acquaintance whom they may invite to hear their miniſters: yea, to all around us whom we can engage to attend to our miniſtrations. O may you imitate him, who acknowledged himſelf a debtor, both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians, both to the wiſe, and the unwiſe; laboring to approve yourſelf unto God, as a workman who needeth not to be aſhamed; or like a good houſholder, bringing out of your treaſury, things *new* and *old*. Let the inhabitants of Worceſter, and of the adjacent villages, find that God has ſet you here as a watchman, to watch for ſouls. Let them who have long known the Lord, be convinced that you are diligently ſtudying his word, to bring forth new ſtores of profitable truth; and let the old fundamental and intereſting doctrines, in which theſe are well eſtabliſhed, be faithfully repreſented to thoſe who have not yet received them.

The great eſſentials of religion, the doctrine of ſalvation by the blood of the LAMB, and by the renewing of the HOLY SPIRIT, are like daily bread, which muſt never be forgotten; but the whole ſyſtem of faith and duty muſt be brought more and more to light, if we would edify the

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ſouls of men. I perſuade myſelf, brother, that you will neither affect unſcriptural novelties, nor yet confine your whole miniſtry to four or five favorite points, to the neglect of all the truths in the Bible beſides. But all you ſay, will, I truſt, have an ultimate reference to our glorious Redeemer; to ſhew the need, the ſuitableneſs, the glory, the tendency of his great ſalvation. HIM you muſt preach, as dwelling in his people's hearts, and being the hope of glory: like Paul, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wiſdom; that you may preſent every one of your hearers perfect in Chriſt Jeſus. To this end you muſt *labor*, as long as you can find an unbelieving ſinner, or an imperfect ſaint, *ſtriving, according to his working, who worketh in you mightily*. Every one of your auditors poſſeſſes a ſoul of ineſtimable worth, which nothing but the blood of Jeſus could have ranſomed from eternal burnings. Every one of them demands your pity, your prayer, and your earneſt endeavors to ſubſerve his ſalvation. The rich, who cannot enter into the kingdom of God, but with extreme difficulty; the poor, who muſt be ſo wretched in both worlds, if not made heirs of the kingdom; the aged, who ſtand on the brink of hell, and muſt fall in, if not very ſoon converted; the young, who may be ſo very uſeful, if called by times, and who are the chief objects of our hope for the continuance of the church, after we are ſilent in the duſt: All the claſſes into which we can divide our congregations, demand our exertions; and how ſhould it rouſe us to think, every time we preach, that ſome of our hearers are, probably, hearing the *laſt* meſſage we can deliver to them from God.

O how *intereſting* and *important* is this charge! The charge of ſouls already expoſed to eternal miſery! All the evils which accurſed war has inflicted, on them that have fallen in the bloody field, or whoſe mangled carcaſſes have

gorged

gorged the monſters of the deep; on thoſe who have languiſhed in hoſpitals, or have been ſcorched to death in their burning dwellings, within theſe few years paſt; all the *temporal* miſeries of all the inhabitants of Poland, France, or Germany, &c. have endured, cannot equal the *eternal* miſery of a ſingle ſoul. Yet this miſery inevitably threatens all who die in their ſins. Into this gulph of woe our hearers muſt ſink, if they are not ſoon brought to repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Yet you have room to hope that, through your inſtrumentality, many may not only be ſaved from ſo great a death, but be, through the righteouſneſs of God our Savior, made heirs of eternal life. Thus ſhall you be acceſſary to their enjoyment of bleſſings *doubly infinite*; even deliverance from eternal woe, and the enjoyment of an eternity of unſpeakable bliſs. O what an honor has our Divine Maſter conferred on every faithful miniſter. Of what importance is the office of a ſpiritual guide, to reclaim unto God thoſe who had wandered far out of the way, and guide them into the path of righteouſneſs and peace! Of how much conſequence is it that we guide them on, in that truly *narrow* way which God has marked out for them in his word, and guard them againſt all bye-paths, whether they turn to the right hand, or to the left! What innumerable dangers ſurround them, and of how much depravity are they ſtill the ſubjects! How then do they need our conſtant attention! If we, in any reſpect, miſlead them, it will be awful, both for them, and for us: but if they arrive ſafely at the heavenly Jeruſalem, with what tranſport ſhall we meet each other, before the throne!

Our charge muſt be *conſtant* and *abiding*. It is here beautifully compared to that of a nurſing father; a character which would be well underſtood among the Iſraelites, in the time of their travels through the wilderneſs. Their

long

long fatiguing marches, muſt render it peculiarly needful, that the tenderer female ſhould, in many inſtances at leaſt, be eaſed of the burden of her ſucking infant, and that the ſtronger parent ſhould carry it in his boſom; nor would this taſk be needful merely for a few months, but for a very conſiderable period, till the child had acquired a degree of ſtrength proportioned to the toils of the difficult journey. Moſes, however, was called to a longer exerciſe of anxious care reſpecting the collective body of Iſrael, than the moſt weakly ſuckling could require, from the moſt robuſt, and affectionate father. And herein our duty reſembles his. It will need to be continued, not merely for a few months, or years, but as long as our lives, and theirs who hear us, are protracted. We muſt not leave the work of God, in which we are engaged, while we are able to proſecute it; nor muſt we lightly abandon the particular ſituations, allotted us by Divine Providence. We hope for a ſucceſſion of new converts: but ſuch will need the ſincere milk of the word, for their growth in grace; and their inexperience and weakneſs will render peculiar attention neceſſary. Nor muſt we leave off admoniſhing an individual, who ſtill remains obſtinate in his rebellion, as long as he will pay the ſmalleſt attention to our remonſtrances: while the beſt ſaint, with whom we are connected, as long as he is on this ſide Jordan, will ſometimes need our aſſiſtance; for he is ſtill in an enemies land, and may ſuffer the ſevereſt loſs, in ſome of his lateſt conflicts. Yea, if both we, and our people, are not always on the watch, ſome of them, in whom the change appeared moſt conſpicuous, when they were firſt brought home to God, may, through that very circumſtance, be the more in danger of temptations to carnal ſecurity. But the longeſt experience, and the livelieſt exerciſe of grace in times paſt, will not warrant us, nor the chriſtian himſelf, to relax our

ſolicitude,

ſolicitude, that he may be kept from diſgracing his profeſſion, even toward the cloſe of his pilgrimage.

I ſcarcely need to add, that the charge given us, will be found *difficult* and *laborious* in its execution. To deliver and guide Iſrael was an arduous undertaking, which Moſes could never have accompliſhed, had he not been commiſſioned, and aſſiſted, from on high. But he feared not the wrath of the King; nor fainted under the toils of the wilderneſs; for he endured, as ſeeing him who is inviſible. And we need as great reſolution as Moſes: for though we are not, at this period, called to ſtand againſt oppoſition from the Kings of this world, we have to contend with the god of it, who is very unwilling to part with his ſlaves. And we need daily aſſiſtance to enable us to imitate the diligence, the faithfulneſs, the patience, and the meekneſs of Moſes, in our intercourſe with our very friends. How elſe ſhall we keep them from being diſcouraged becauſe of the way; from being drawn aſide after idols; or even from turning back, as it were, unto Egypt? How ſhall we direct them to the antitype of the brazen ſerpent? How ſhall we aſſiſt them to fight againſt that Amalek, with whom the Lord hath ſworn that he will have war for ever, till he be utterly deſtroyed? How, in a word, ſhall we conduct them ſafely to the heavenly Canaan? You fully conceive, brother, the import of theſe figurative expreſſions; and are ready to ſay, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?* You know that God alone can accompliſh them; but as he condeſcends to employ his miniſters, in executing his gracious deſigns, and has given us the charge of his people, as he gave unto Moſes the care of conducting ancient Iſrael, let us proceed to ſome further reflections,

Secondly. On the *principal requiſites* to a due diſcharge of our important truſt.

Certainly,

Certainly, to guide ſouls to heaven muſt require *knowledge* and *judgment*. It muſt require an acquaintance with the true character of the God of Iſrael, and a cordial ſenſe of his glory; with the knowledge of his holy law, its wide extent, ſpirituality, equity and excellence. Thereby it is, that we muſt acquire that knowledge of ſin, which is neceſſary to prove the neceſſity of ſalvation, by a great and gracious Redeemer. And we muſt be able to inſtruct ſinners in the way of peace, whereby they may approach to a holy God, and live; in which he can be juſt, and yet be gracious to whom he pleaſes, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin, without clearing the guilty; and, without injury to his righteouſneſs, manifeſting his pardoning mercy, to all thoſe who have entered into covenant with him, by pleading that propitiatory ſacrifice, which he himſelf provided, to take away ſin. We muſt cultivate an extenſive acquaintance with the whole revelation God has made of his will; and be able to direct the redeemed of the Lord, in all the ways of holineſs and righteouſneſs, in which they ſhould walk before him, till they entered his promiſed reſt. All theſe ſubjects ſhould be underſtood in their harmonious connection: that the law may be uſed in ſubſerviency to the goſpel; and the goſpel employed for practical purpoſes. But for this end, we need to pray, that the ſpirit of judgment may reſt upon us, to make us of quick underſtanding in the fear of the Lord, that we may teach our dear people the good knowledge of the Lord; that their love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and all judgment; that they may prove the things that differ, and approve the things which are excellent.

Wiſdom and *prudence* are highly neceſſary for us, as well as knowledge and judgment; both to aſſiſt us in our addreſſes to our hearers, and to regulate our own example. It is of great importance that a miniſter ſhould know the

due limits of his province, that he may avoid intermeddling with that which does not appertain to his office; and may discharge his duty, respecting all that truly belongs to it, in the manner which is the most likely to be successful. It is, for instance, our bounden duty to bear testimony against all sin, and this must not be omitted, on account of our knowing that some of our friends are guilty; but if we would be truly useful, we must forbear those personalities which would point out an individual to great part of the assembly; and even in our private admonitions, we must be careful to make it appear that they are not angry reproaches, but reproofs dictated by love; and then, if men will hold us as enemies for speaking the truth, in real good-will to their souls, we may leave it with our master, to support us under their resentments; we must offend *any body* rather than HIM. But while we oppose sin in others, may we especially mortify it in ourselves; and be more strict at home than any where: Abstaining from the appearance of evil; concerned to order all our affairs with discretion, and to cut off occasion from those who seek an occasion against us. "As there are many who are ready "to make a minister an offender for a word, or the least "inadvertent action, he needs prudence every where, and "in every thing. Imprudence is one of the greatest ene-"mies to the pastoral office: and, excepting a gracious "heart, no qualification is more necessary, for a minister, "than prudence *."

Assiduity and *diligence* are very needful for the discharge of the ministerial calling. Not only should we be ready to preach the word, in season, and out of season; but we must apply closely to study, and unite with it fervent prayer.

* SPRING's Sermon, at the ordination of THURSTON, in Sommersworth. 1792.

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Underſtanding is a well-ſpring of life to him that hath it; but this well is deep, and it is laborious work to draw up theſe living waters. Clearly to exhibit to our people the great truths of religion, and to point out their ſalutary tendency, to pacify the conſcience, and purify the heart; keeping back nothing that is profitable; but defending the doctrines of the goſpel againſt all oppoſers, and abuſers of them, and guarding our hearers againſt error on either hand, is no trivial buſineſs, which may be performed without exertion or toil. Not only to produce in the pulpit things new and old, but continually to watch over them who are committed to our care, endeavoring, in truly paſtoral viſits, to water privately, what we had ſown in public, requires our utmoſt diligence. And when the name of Chriſt is openly diſhonored by his profeſſed followers, his miniſters muſt not decline the painful taſk of keeping up diſcipline in his church, admoniſhing offenders, and, if they cannot be reclaimed, impartially excluding ſuch wicked perſons from chriſtian communion.

Fidelity and a *ſenſe of reſponſibility* to our Lord, are indiſpenſible qualifications of a miniſter of Jeſus, and will carry him through unnumbered difficulties. Moſes had this teſtimony, from God himſelf, that he was faithful, as a ſervant, in all his houſe: though the Son of God himſelf, who once appeared in a ſervile character, and as the apoſtle and high-prieſt of our profeſſion, became obedient unto death, hath in all things the pre-eminence, and is juſtly accounted worthy of ſuperior glory, in reſpect of his perfect fidelity, as he is infinitely ſuperior to all the houſehold of God in native dignity. *His* work was unſpeakably more arduous than that of Moſes, and executed with ſublimer zeal, though with greater abaſement and difficulty. But Moſes, who was employed in ſettling that œconomy which was introductory to a better diſpenſation, was careful to do

nothing as of his own will, but in every punctilio to act agreeable to the orders he received from Jehovah. Even in the framing of the tabernacle, he was admonished of God: *See*, said he, *that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount.* And thus must we, my brother, be in all things faithful to him who has appointed us. As servants of the wisest, greatest, and best of masters, we must implicitly obey his will: or, as soldiers, who are accustomed to the strictest subordination, we must regard every command of the Captain of our Salvation; willing endure hardships, for his sake, and be so intent upon our holy warfare, as not to entangle ourselves with extraneous concerns; but must make it the whole business of our lives to please him, who hath chosen us to serve under his banner. God has placed us, as watchmen on the walls of Zion, and enjoined that we should watch for souls, as those who must give an account how we perform that duty. I know that you consider the xxxiiid of Ezekiel as of divine authority, and are well aware, that the decrees of God would no more excuse our neglect of the spiritual interests of our people, than they would excuse the negligence of one, who was appointed to keep watch in a city, by night; or, who was placed as centinel to alarm an army, in case of the enemies approach: but our crime would be as much more heinous, as our charge is of greater importance. O may we both, on our dying beds, be found *pure from the blood* of souls; and be able to attest, that *having renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not handling the word of God deceitfully, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, so speak we in Christ; by the manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience.*

With these qualifications we must connect *tenderness* and *affection.* This idea, especially, is beautifully exhibited in the text. *Carry them, in thy bosom, as a nursing father bearetb*

beareth the ſucking child, &c. Let us endeavor to give its full force to this pathetic alluſion. Picture to yourſelf a caſe, which muſt have repeatedly occured, in the courſe of the forty years Moſes ſpent with his people in the wilderneſs. An Iſraelite, we will ſuppoſe, ſoon after he firſt became a father, is bereaved of the delight of his eyes, while an only pledge of conjugal affection remains, alternately to increaſe and aſſuage his grief. How weighty, but how intereſting would he feel that charge, which yet he would not for all the world decline or transfer! A neighbor's wife might he hire to ſuckle it; but he himſelf would alſo feed it, with the freſheſt manna, and, as much as poſſible, take the care of it himſelf. However long and tedious his march by day, parental affection would make the burden of a motherleſs babe, not only light, but pleaſant: and, at night, he would lay it to reſt in his own boſom. When God viſited the ſins of Iſrael with fiery ſerpents, which bit them, ſo that much of the people died; how would this nurſing father feel his anxiety increaſed! His only ſon would ſcarce ever be off his knee, in the tent; never out of his boſom on their journeys: and if, in ſpite of all his precautions, a ſerpent had bitten his darling child, its deadly poiſon was ſpreading rapidly through his veins, he began to be convulſed, and nothing but the remedy preſcribed by the merciful Jehovah, could ſave him from the agonies of death; how would the father run, and hold him up in his arms, gently forcing open his cloſing eyes, to view the brazen ſerpent? With what gratitude would his boſom glow, when he perceived his infant inſtantly revive? How would he, after this recovery, purſue his courſe with renewed vigor; and though he knew himſelf doomed to fall in the wilderneſs, he would fondly anticipate his offſpring's future poſſeſſion of the promiſed land; and that hope would counterbalance all his preſent affliction and toil. O my brother, this is the pattern we are taught, by the text,

text, to place before us. With ſuch feelings as theſe, may we direct the eyes of our dear people to a crucified Savior: with ſuch feelings as theſe may we bear them in our boſoms, to the confines of glory! We find Paul, in the New Teſtament, applying like ſimilitudes, to repreſent the affection, which he, and his brethren, felt for their converts. He tells the Theſſalonians, *We were gentle among you, even as a* NURSE *cheriſheth her children: ſo being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the goſpel of God only, but alſo our own ſouls, becauſe ye were dear unto us. Ye know, how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a* FATHER *his children, that ye ſhould walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.* Surely miniſters have ſpecial reaſon to take to themſelves the charge given to the churches, *Let all your things be done in love.* Genuine benevolence ſhould evidently diffuſe itſelf, through all our ſermons, our prayers, our warnings, our reproofs, our whole converſation and conduct. It was a lovely character, which, I was long ago informed, was given by a deiſtical phyſician, of the late Dr. Gillies, of Glaſgow: he ſaid, "He believed that John Gillies would be glad to "carry all mankind, in his boſom, to the kingdom of hea-"ven." May the enemies of the goſpel never find any thing worſe to ſay of you, my brother!

Patience and *meekneſs* will naturally flow from this ſincere affection: and the patience and meekneſs of chriſtian miniſters will be often tried. Moſes, the meekeſt of all men, had enough to do, to bear with the frowardneſs of Iſrael. We have ſeen an end of all human perfection, and this context ſhews us his patience nearly worn out: I fear, brother, ours would be found far more defective, in much ſmaller trials. But what parent would abandon his peeviſh child in a waſte howling wilderneſs? What miniſ-

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ter of Jeſus ſhall dare to give up his office, becauſe he meets with ingratitude, and unmerited reproach; after all his anxieties and labors for his peoples welfare? Let us count the coſt, brother, and go no further on, in our work, if our maſter's ſmiles will not make us amends for our people's frowns. They who are employed under the phyſician of ſouls, muſt expect delirious patients to give many provocations to their tendereſt friends. We muſt, therefore, not be eaſily moved to reſentment, by unkindneſs and injuries; but inſtead of being overcome of evil, muſt labor to overcome evil with good. Let us remember our Lord's loving kindneſs to us; what patience and long-ſuffering he has diſplayed, ever ſince we entered his ſervice; and, if he hath kept us in his family, and now called us to bear an honorable office in his church, verily, we muſt acknowledge, it is his *gentleneſs hath made us great.*

Self-denial and *reſolution* are graces we ſhall be daily called to exerciſe; and without them, it will be impoſſible to continue ſteadfaſt in the work of the Lord. In the ſtrength of grace, we muſt be determined not to forſake the flocks, of which the Holy Spirit has made us overſeers, in the time of danger: that is the time when the hireling fleeth, but it is our beſt opportunity to ſhew our love to the Lord, and to his people. Then it is, that like David, we muſt venture our lives for the ſheep; or rather, muſt ſhew that we have the very mind of his Son and Lord, who bought both us, and them, with his precious blood. If we are duly impreſſed with the glory of his diſintereſted love, who *laid down his life for us*, it will not appear an extravagant inference, of the beloved John, that *we ought* to be ready *to lay down our lives for the brethren.* Whether providence ſhall literally call us to this duty, or not, may we ſhew that we have the temper from which it would aſſuredly ſpring: habitually feeling the force of that

obſervation,

obſervation, *For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf.* He listened not to the temptation of ſhunning the croſs, even though it came from an apoſtle; but replied, *Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou ſavoreſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men:* And immediately he began to inculcate the abſolute neceſſity of ſelf-denial, and bearing the croſs, upon all his diſciples. Let us look, thereſore, to him who endured the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, ſuſtaining the croſs, and deſpiſing the ſhame, for the ſake of our ſalvation; and may his love conſtrain us to ſpend, and be ſpent, if we may but ſubſerve the intereſt of immortal ſouls, and bear them, as in our boſoms, to the paradiſe of God.

Laſtly, *Faith* and *confidence in God* will be found needful for us, throughout the whole of our pilgrimage; that we may hold on our way, and finiſh our own courſe with joy; and alſo fulfil our duty, as ſpiritual guides, and nurſing fathers, to others. Often has the Lord tried his miniſters with outward ſtraights, but never has he deſerted them. Many are their inward conflicts, but grace ſhall make them more than conquerors. Both their external trials, and their ſpiritual exerciſes, are commonly means of their acquiring the tongue of the learned, that they may know how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary, and comfort thoſe who are caſt down, with the conſolations wherewith they themſelves are comforted by God. Thus are they enabled to atteſt, from experience, that he can furniſh a table in the wilderneſs, and open ſtreams in the deſart. They can ſet their ſeals to the truth of his promiſes, and encourage others to caſt their care upon him, who careth ſo affectionately for them. And as to all the dangers and difficulties of their miniſterial work, the Lord, by the ſupply of his ſpirit, communicates wiſdom and grace; that they may make a ſucceſsful ſtand againſt the enemies of his truth;

truth; and feed and guide his people. We cannot enſure the fruit of our labors, but he can do it infallibly; and he will accept, and reward, thoſe whom he makes faithful, whether their ſucceſs equal their expectations, or not.

Let us, finally reflect,

Thirdly. On the MOTIVES and ENCOURAGEMENTS, which ſhould induce us to perſevere in our work, notwithſtanding the difficulties which may attend it.

Conſider, my dear brother, *whoſe people they are*, that are committed to your affectionate regard: They are a people *peculiarly the Lord's*. Moſes, when his patience was nearly exhauſted, ſaid, Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them that thou ſhould'ſt ſay unto me, Carry them in thy boſom? &c. But Moſes acted more in character, as a man of God, at a former period, when their being GOD's people was a weightier conſideration with him, than if he himſelf had been their immediate father. Exod. xxxii. 7—14. Scarcely ever did mere man ſhew ſuch diſintereſted benevolence, as he then exemplified. O that we may thus care for our dear people, as being God's people, whom he hath *formed*, and is ſtill forming, *for himſelf, that they may ſhew forth his praiſe:* while we hope that he who gathereth the outcaſts of Iſrael, will gather others to himſelf, beſides thoſe whom he hath already gathered; and that, by our inſtrumentality, he will enlarge the frontiers of his viſible kingdom, and go on to accompliſh the number of his choſen.

The conſideration, *whence God had brought this people*, had great weight with Moſes, at the time to which I have juſt referred: and ſo it ſhould with us. He has brought out his ſpiritual Iſrael, from worſe bondage than Iſrael after the fleſh had felt in Egypt; and has herein given a ſuperior

rior diſplay of his great goodneſs, and the efficacy of his mighty arm. And, I truſt, you will ſoon find ſome among your own congregation, of whom it may be truly ſaid, that you were the honored inſtrument of their happy deliverance from the yoke of their tyrannic lord. This ſurely will enhance your earneſt ſolicitude, that they may be ſafely conducted to the Canaan above.

Reflect, that God's peculiar people, were not only redeemed by *power* from the yoke of Satan, as Iſrael was redeemed from Pharoah's cruel dominion; but have been alſo redeemed, from deſerved deſtruction by an invaluable *price*. God had *done* great things for thoſe whom he entruſted to Moſes, but now, God incarnate has *ſuffered* greater things, for thoſe whom he has committed to you. He who has given you charge concerning them, bought both them, and you, with his own blood. Were either of us, brother, to neglect the church of God, how muſt it awaken the diſpleaſure of our bleſſed Lord! Might he not aſk us, "Did I die for theſe precious ſouls, and will you refuſe to labor for them? Did I ſuffer ſo much for them, and are you unwilling to ſuffer a little for their ſakes? Did I bear the curſe, in their ſtead; and will not you endure a light croſs, for their benefit?"

Remember, brother, *that your intereſt is connected with theirs*. The more they thrive in vital godlineſs, the more they will pray for you, ſympathize with you, and help you. Thoſe ſubjects, which would be moſt edifying, and that manner of treating them, which would be moſt intereſting to them, will tend moſt to your perſonal edification. If they are fed with chaff, leanneſs awaits your own ſoul; but if you enter truly into the ſpirit of the goſpel, you are moſt likely to do them eſſential ſervice. Then you, and they, ſhall at once experience divine light, irradiating your minds;

minds; the peace of God, which paſſes underſtanding, pacifying your conſciences, and his love ſweetly conſtraining you to new obedience.

Let us conſider ſeriouſly, that *if* our hearts are *not* conſtantly ſet upon our people's welfare, *our work* is likely to *become a ſnare to ourſelves.* Being officially converſant with the things of God, from day to day, they will either make a *deeper* impreſſion on us, than on others, or they will affect us ſo much the *leſs*; and we ſhall become the more indifferent towards them, through their being ſo habitually taken into our lips: for to us, as well as to our hearers, the word will be either a ſavor of life, or of death. Beſides, as our reſearches lead us, more than private chriſtians, to attend to theological controverſies, and to notice the *objections* that are urged againſt the truth; if we are not continually *making uſe* of the truth, we ſhall be more likely than moſt others, to be turned aſide from it. Alſo, if we are not *profitable* to our hearers, *we* ſhall moſt probably prove *prejudical* to *them:* It is next to impoſſible that a miniſter ſhould do, neither good, nor harm. But how awful would it be for us, to miſlead the ſouls of men, and inſtead of alluring them to Chriſt, to draw them off from his genuine goſpel, or prejudice them againſt it! Beſides, if we look not well to our own hearts, and are not truly concerned for our people's edification, *they* will, in various reſpects, do *us* harm; and it may go ill with us, for their ſakes. If we aim not heartily at making them more ſpiritually minded, they will make us more earthly minded. If we pluck them not out of the net, they will draw us into a ſnare. It was ſad for Moſes, through his impatience, in the day of provocation, to be himſelf excluded from the earthly Canaan, after he had led a whole nation to its borders: but how much more awful would it be, to be excluded the heavenly Canaan, after being em-

ployed to ſhew others the way to it? While I rejoice in the fulleſt perſuaſion of your ſincerity, I need make no excuſe for introducing this thought, ſince we both recollect, that an apoſtle counted it expedient, to cultivate a godly jealouſy, leſt after preaching unto others, he himſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.

Let the *dangers of the wilderneſs*, to which we, and our people are ſtill expoſed, awaken our ſolicitude for their ſafety. Here a roaring lion prowleth about, ſeeking whom he may devour; may we reſiſt him ſtedfaſt in the faith, and encourage our people ſo to do. This is a land of darkneſs, like the ſhadow of death; let us urge them cloſely to follow the pillar of fire, that goeth before them, to give them light in their pilgrimage. It is a land of drought, and of barrenneſs; but God, by his miniſters, furniſhes his people with heavenly manna, and with water from Chriſt the true rock. They are travelling through a land infeſted with fiery ſerpents; we need to direct them to look, again and again, to him who was typified by that ſerpent of braſs, which Moſes lifted up in the wilderneſs. Enemies will harraſs them all the way, often making open oppoſition, and at other times more dangerouſly vexing them by their wiles; we muſt lift up our hands for them to God, as Moſes did during the battle with Amalek, and encourage them to truſt in the Captain of the Lord's hoſts, and to take to them the whole armor of God. Surely they need a faithful, ſkilful, compaſſionate guide, who ſhall carry them in his boſom, as a nurſing father beareth the ſucking child, till they enjoy the inheritance given them, by the promiſe, and oath of Jehovah.

Sink not under diſcouragement, nor ſay, as Moſes once did, *O my Lord, ſend, by the hand of him by whom thou wilt ſend.* For you have been called to *an office* the *nobleſt*, the moſt *important*, the moſt *benevolent*, that can be entruſted

to

to man. God has commiſſioned you, not to execute his wrath, but to ſubſerve the glorious purpoſes of his grace. Indeed he ſeldom employs thoſe whom he means to ſave, in inflicting vengeance on others. *Once* he commiſſioned Joſhua indeed, to expel the idolatrous, and barbarous nations of Canaan, whoſe iniquity was fully ripe. But he, *generally* employs thoſe as inſtruments of vengeance to deſtroy mens bodies, whom he means alſo to deſtroy; and though they have ſubſerved his righteous purpoſes, yet as they aimed at a very different end from his, they have afterwards been puniſhed for their conduct (Iſa. x. 5—15, Hoſ. i. 4): but on the other hand, he commonly employs thoſe as inſtruments of mercy, to ſave mens ſouls, whom he intends to be themſelves partakers of his great ſalvation. You, my brother, are not called to kill mens bodies, but to ſave their ſouls; not to burn down their dwellings, but to prevent their dwelling with everlaſting burnings. The work of a goſpel miniſter is the neareſt akin to the work of Jeſus Chriſt of any work in the world. He has ſet us an example the moſt perfect, to direct us in the diſcharge of it; though it was wiſely ordered that he had no great ſucceſs in his miniſtry, to teach us that he had a ſtill higher end in coming into the world. He preached the goſpel to teach *us* how to preach it; but he died to *purge away our ſins*, which was work none could do but himſelf. We, indeed, ſeparate from him, can do nothing; but he has ſaid, *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* Paul himſelf had no more ſufficiency of his own, than you, or I. And it was for the ſake of ordinary miniſters, as much as of the apoſtles, that Jeſus Chriſt declared, *Lo, I am with you alway, to the end of the world.* You have apoſtolic authority to apply to yourſelf, and to every true believer, the promiſe once made to Joſhua, *I will never leave nor forſake thee.* Therefore, my beloved brother, *Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus:* and when you have the deepeſt

conviction

conviction of your own insufficiency, remember that *his* strength is displayed, to the most perfect advantage in *our* weakness. To encourage your expectations, let me remind you, that the power of Jehovah, instead of being *exhausted*, in the days of old, was far from being all *exerted*; he has taught us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, to hope for more glorious displays of all-conquering grace, than ever the jewish, or even the primitive christian world beheld. Let then the *watchmen* of Zion, who make mention of the name of Jehovah, *not keep silence; nor let him rest in silence, till he establish Jerusalem, and make her a praise in the earth.* The *husband* and *redeemer* of the church, shall soon *be called the God of the whole earth. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

To conclude: I would remind you that *you shall share the heavenly inheritance*, with those whose guide and conductor you are now appointed. The great and precious promises of the gospel, which are the result of the divine *counsel*, and are confirmed by the *oath* of God, ensure an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, to all true believers. The land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands, while the blessing of the Lord was upon it, was only a shadow of that perfect felicity that awaits all the redeemed. And, unlike the children of Israel, your toils shall end as soon as you enter the promised land; Death is the last enemy, and death itself is conquered, and shall be swallowed up in victory. In that day, when the greater part of the mighty potentates of the earth, shall tremble at the recollection of all their boasted victories, and of the myriads they had sacrificed to Abaddon; when they shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, in the day that he maketh inquisition for blood; then you, my brother, I trust, like the other

faithful

faithful ambaſſadors of the Prince of Peace, ſhall head a goodly company, whom you had directed to the fountain opened for ſin and uncleanneſs: and you ſhall ſay, with humble grateful tranſport, "Behold, Lord, here am I, and here are the children thou haſt given me, whom I bore in my boſom, as a nurſing father his ſucking child, in the wilderneſs; through thy grace, are we now arrived at the inheritance thou haſt promiſed and prepared." With them, you ſhall enter into the joy of the Lord, and ſurely the eternal happineſs of every individual, to whoſe converſion and ſalvation your miniſtry was rendered ſubſervient, will make a ſenſible and everlaſting addition to your own.

May all theſe motives, and many more which the word of God exhibits to our view, be deeply impreſſed on your heart, and mine! And may the peculiar happineſs you enjoy, in the cordial friendſhip, and chriſtian harmony, which ſubſiſts between you, and our honored brother, the paſtor of the church which aſſembles ſtatedly within theſe walls, and between his people, and thoſe that are committed to your care, never ſuffer the leaſt interruption; but may it prove an additional excitement, to be always abounding in the work of the Lord. This union, ſo natural an effect of divine grace, though ſeldom ſeen, through the influence of deplorable infirmity, affords peculiar pleaſure to all the friends of religion, who are here from a diſtance; and excites to unite in prayer, that the miniſters and people of both congregations, continuing to purſue the nobleſt of all deſigns, the glory of God, and the ſalvation of the ſouls of men, a large harveſt of converts may be gathered in unto God from this neighborhood, and though, at times, you may ſow in tears, may you both at laſt reap with joy unſpeakable. Amen.

A SERMON,

A SERMON,

&c.

EPH. iv. 11.

HE GAVE SOME—PASTORS AND TEACHERS.

My Christian Brethren,

ALTHOUGH I partake of your pleaſure in this public recognition of the intereſting relation which you have formed with our dear brother; yet, I could have wiſhed that the duties which now devolve on you, were to be ſtated and enforced by ſome more experienced miniſter, whoſe better knowledge would have furniſhed you with more ſuitable inſtruction, and whoſe ſuperior years would have attached a greater weight to his advice; but ſince you have requeſted me to undertake this part of the ſolemn ſervice of the day, I will endeavor, with affectionate fidelity, to diſcharge it; hoping, that the Head of the Church may put ſome treaſure into the earthen veſſel, and enrich and comfort us all with his preſence.

The words of my text, with the preceding verſes, are deſigned to *illuſtrate*, to *connect*, and to *confirm* ſome predictions in the Old Teſtament.

In the ſixty-eighth pſalm, the prophet having in view ſome illuſtrious conqueror, thus celebrates his triumphs: v. 18, "Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led cap-"tivity captive, thou haſt received gifts for men." This

propheſy

prophesy the apostle *illustrates*, by teaching, that the triumphant language of the psalmist designates the *ascension of Jesus Christ*, when "having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over "them by his cross, and took his seat at the right hand "of God."

In the third chapter of Jeremiah's prophesy, the Lord comforted his people, by promising to "give them pastors "according to his heart, who should feed them with knowledge and understanding:" Now Paul *connects* prophesy, by declaring, that the gifts which the Psalmist says the Messiah received for men, were the same as the pastors and teachers, which, by Jeremiah, were promised to the church; and he *confirms* the joint prediction, by appealing to manifest and multiplied proofs of its accomplishment, in the persons of "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and "teachers;" which, at that very time, were employed for the edification of the disciples of Christ.

Although apostles and prophets, in the strict sense of the terms, are no longer upon earth, because the peculiar and miraculous powers with which they were invested are no longer necessary in the church; yet, such gifts as are adapted to its circumstances are not withheld; and *you*, my brethren, are put in possession of one to-day—a pastor, to feed you with knowledge and understanding. You have requested me to introduce, as it were, your minister among you: how can I better fulfil your desire, than by presenting him to you as *the gift of Christ*, and earnestly recommending you, as such, to receive him now; and, as such, invariably to consider him in future.

Ministers of Christ, my brethren, like most other blessings, are over-valued by some, and held in too little esteem by others: happy will it be, if you are enabled to find out,

 and

and preſerve, the medium between thoſe extremes; and, happy ſhall I account myſelf, if I am enabled to aſſiſt you, in regulating your regards for the ſervant of God, whom you have freely choſen for your paſtor.

The paſſage I have ſelected, places your miniſter exactly in that point of view, in which you cannot behold him without reſpect, at the ſame time that it ſecures you from eſteeming the ſervant above his Lord: it teaches you to regard him as *a gift*; but, at the ſame time, a gift not to be deſpiſed; for, he is the gift of CHRIST. "Unto every "one of us," ſaith the apoſtle, in the preceding verſes, "is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of "Chriſt—*he* gave gifts unto men;" and among other of his gracious beſtowments, "*he* gave ſome—paſtors and "teachers."

From various remarks, which are ſuggeſted by the conſideration of miniſters being the gifts of Chriſt, let us ſelect a few that may be ſuitable to the preſent occaſion.

Firſt. It ſuggeſts THE CARE WHICH THE BLESSED REDEEMER EXERCISES OVER HIS CHURCH UPON EARTH.

When our Lord gave his laſt inſtructions to his apoſtles, he encouraged them and their ſucceſſors to obedience, by promiſing to be with them alway, even to the end of time. He ſoon began to fulfil this promiſe, when on the day of Pentecoſt he ſo remarkably "endued them with "power from on high," and attended their miniſtry with ſuch wonderful efficacy, that the very perſons who were hardened under the groans of the Maſter, now melt under the words of his ſervants, and joyfully become the diſciples of him whom they had crucified.

Powerful

Powerful oppofition from the world, followed the early profperity of the church: "The kings of the earth and "the rulers took counfel together againft the Lord, and "againft his anointed; but, he that fitteth in the heavens "laughed them to fcorn; the Lord had them in derifion— "He fpoke to them in his wrath, in his fore difpleafure "he vexed them;" and triumphing over their fubtilty and power, he faith, "Yet have I fet my king upon my holy "hill of Zion." Perfecuted and defpifed as it was, yet "the truth ran and was glorified"—Neither the influence of princes, the terror of armies, the pride of learning, the ignorance of the barbarian, the prejudices of the Jew; nor the threatning nor the torment of fcourges, racks, or fires, could prevent its prevalence; and, though the inftruments employed in its propagation were, for the moft part, deftitute of the ornaments of fcience, or the fupport of civil power; yet, "mightily grew the word of the "Lord, and prevailed."

Many indeed of the faithful minifters of Jefus fuffered in his fervice, and fealed the truth they had propagated with their blood: The church was bereaved of thofe precious gifts of Chrift, whilft fome of its members were martyred, with their paftors, and others lived to bewail their lofs; but, whilft the enemy was thus impoverifhing the city of God, JESUS was "leading captivity captive;" and, with the fpoils he took from the foe, he ftill enriched and adorned Jerufalem. Thofe who erewhile where "breathing out threatning and flaughter" againft the men who called on the Savior's name, were fubdued by the power of his grace, and became "preachers of the faith "they had once deftroyed." If the Jews ftone STEPHEN, *the deacon*, the church fhall have PAUL, *the apoftle*, in his room—if the hearers of the gofpel be driven

 from

from Jeruſalem, they ſhall " preach it at Phenice, and Cy-
" prus, and Antioch."

The more perſecution prevailed, the more did it call forth the powers and the graces of the faithful: the weak became ſtrong—the timid, bold—the indolent, active—zeal warmed the heart and inſpired the tongue—freſh paſtors and teachers were ſtill raiſed up, and their labors were attended with great ſucceſs; for, " the Lord added daily " unto the church ſuch as ſhould be ſaved."

The ſame proceſs has more or leſs been carrying on ever ſince; and, whether the paſtors of Chriſt's flock have been removed by means of violence, or by a natural death, their places have again been occupied; and, in many inſtances, by thoſe who have excelled their predeceſſors in piety, wiſdom, and ſucceſs.

When the Hebrew chriſtians mourned over their deceaſed teachers, how did the apoſtle comfort their hearts, but by reminding them, that " *Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame* " *yeſterday, to-day, and for ever!*" and the hiſtory of nearly eighteen centuries, gives ſtability to this ground of conſolation. Behold a new evidence of it to-day! Behold another proof that our Lord remembers his church, " now " he is in his kingdom!" and may the recollection of this day enliven your hope, my brethren, and eſtabliſh your confidence, ſhould you live to attend your preſent paſtor to the tomb! Though Chriſt has preſented you with a valuable gift, you muſt not forget that it is a mortal one—a veſſel, which, though it contain a heavenly treaſure, is compoſed of earthly materials, and may ſoon be broken.

We ſhould never form an earthly connexion without reflecting on the certainty of its diſſolution—The huſband and

and the wife, the parent and the child, dear and ſoft as thoſe relations are, muſt think of parting; and *you*, my brethren, muſt part with your miniſter. Should ſuch an event be occaſioned by any improper behavior on your part, the Lord may correct you for your ſin, by withholding a bleſſing you abuſe; but ſhould your paſtor be taken away by the hand of God, comfort yourſelves with the thought, that *miniſters are the gifts of* CHRIST—that *he* can eaſily replace your loſs—and that his continued care over his church, lays a ground of expectation that it will be ſo.

Secondly. The conſideration that miniſters are the gifts of Chriſt, ſuggeſts THE OBLIGATIONS UNDER WHICH A PEOPLE WHO ARE INDULGED WITH A FAITHFUL PASTOR ARE LAID TO PECULIAR GRATITUDE.

Every good thing we enjoy cometh from above, and therefore demands our thankfulneſs; but ſingular bleſſings demand ſingular acknowledgments; and, to thoſe who know how to value it aright, there are few gifts to be more highly prized than a worthy miniſter. The difficulty which you, my brethren, have found in replacing your late paſtor, muſt have convinced you that a ſuitable ſucceſſor is no common favor. A man of piety, prudence, zeal, and other miniſterial gifts, is a ſcarce commodity, which no human labor can produce, nor wealth procure; and which, if obtained, can be only enjoyed as the *gift of Chriſt*.

Above five years you have been ſeeking, and, I preſume, praying for a ſpiritual guide; your prayers are now anſwered; many churches in the ſame ſituation have been waiting and praying for a ſimilar bleſſing; our brother might have been given to them inſtead of you; conſider yourſelves as peculiarly favored, and be peculiarly grateful.

Thirdly.

Thirdly. IF MINISTERS ARE THE GIFTS OF CHRIST, THEY OUGHT TO BE HIGHLY ESTEEMED FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

True friendſhip prizes a gift more for the giver's ſake, than for its intrinſic value; and, though I would not ſuggeſt that Miniſters have a leſs claim on the affections and reſpect of a people than other good men; yet, it is as the *gifts of Chriſt*, that they demand *peculiar regard.* As long as they conduct themſelves in a manner worthy the exalted office they ſuſtain, ſo long their Maſter ſaith unto them, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me:" and the becoming or unbecoming conduct of their people to them, Chriſt conſiders as to himſelf, and will ſay reſpecting both the one and the other, at laſt, "Inaſmuch as ye did it "unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye did it "unto me."

Poſſeſt with this idea of your miniſter, you will be always diſpoſed to view his perſon and his miniſtry in the moſt favorable light; and ſhould you perceive an imperfection in your paſtor (for to abſolute perfection what modern paſtor can pretend, when an apoſtle diſclaimed it?) you will either bury it in his virtues, or cover it with the mantle of your own affections.

As the gift of Chriſt to *you*, your miniſter ſtands in a relation intereſting and intimate—he is become as it were your property; but this, ſo far from allowing you to treat him with ſeverity or neglect, is deſigned to endear him to you the more; for no man is ſuppoſed to "hate his own "fleſh, but on the contrary to nouriſh and cheriſh it, even "as the Lord the church." Indeed, when a man devotes his time, with his bodily and mental powers for a peoples good, equity to *him*, requires the return of affection and reſpect;

reſpect; but how much more compulſory is the demand, when his perſon, his graces, and his miniſterial endowments, are conſidered as *the gift of* CHRIST!

Fourthly. IF MINISTERS ARE THE GIFTS OF CHRIST, IT IS OF IMPORTANCE THAT THEY SHOULD BE IMPROVED TO THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THEY WERE BESTOWED. This is the laſt obſervation I ſhall make on the ſentiment of the text, and to this I wiſh more amply to engage your attention.

None of God's gifts are beſtowed without deſign—the falling ſhower, and the clear ſhining of the ſun after rain, the wintry froſts and the ſummer heats, have their reſpective uſes; nor can you ſuppoſe that the great Head of the Church hath called our brother by his grace, put him into the miniſtry, and given him to you as a paſtor, without having in view ſome important end. It will now be your wiſdom, as it is your duty, to conſider ſeriouſly what that end is, and to be practically concerned to have it anſwered.

Plainly is this deſign unfolded in the words following the text, "for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work "of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt:" that is, not for your increaſe in numbers only, but alſo for your improvement in wiſdom and goodneſs. Now *your duties*, my brethren, are conſequent on your paſtors: if he be a teacher, you muſt be learners; if he have a building to erect, you muſt be fellow laborers; and, unleſs you be wanting in the duties of your ſtations, you may be aſſured that the divine bleſſing will not be withheld: and,

1. If you would have the deſign of the paſtoral relation anſwered, you muſt be *much in prayer* for your miniſter: His work is great, and the neceſſary qualifications for

for the diſcharge of it, are neither unimportant nor few. It requires much wiſdom to underſtand the ſcriptures—much fortitude to oppoſe the errors, the indifference, and the impurities of the times—much zeal to labor extenſively and habitually for Chriſt and ſouls—much prudence to adviſe and act in difficult caſes, and much perſonal religion to impart a ſavor of Chriſt to all his converſation, his diſcourſes, and his prayers.

Here then is ſcope for your petitions; the furniture of a chriſtian miniſter muſt come from above, and from thence it muſt be ſought. "Brethren, *pray* for us," ſaid the apoſtle of the Gentiles—Brethren, pray for *us*, *we* alſo ſay: Men of like paſſions with yourſelves—expoſed to temptation from numerous quarters—as prone naturally to depart from God as you—liable to ſtupidity, carnality, and vanity—O, if you have any deſire to ſee us holy, ſpiritual, active, honorable—*pray for us.*

You are not unacquainted, brethren, with the difficulties which lie in the way of our *ſucceſs*. The labor of the Carthagenian general is not to be compared with ours! What are the ſtony Alps to a *ſtony heart!* or what the Roman legions to the powers of darkneſs—"to ſpiritual "wickedneſs in high places!" Not merely to inform the judgments—to excite the paſſions—to conquer the prejudices of education, and to reform the manners of men, are before us—a more arduous taſk preſents itſelf. My brethren, *our* point is not gained without *a change of heart!* a renovation of the whole ſoul! a converſion from the power of Satan unto God! But who is ſufficient for theſe things? Can *human* energy effect them? Nay, my brethren, we are compelled to own that "we are not ſufficient of "ourſelves to do any thing as of ourſelves—all our ſuffi-"ciency is of God." Were all the moral virtues, and ſupernatual endowments, which have ever adorned the

ſaint,

ſaint, or diſtinguiſhed the apoſtle, concentrated in one chriſtian paſtor, neither will believers be improved, nor ſinners converted, without the preſence, the power, and the grace of Chriſt! In vain we enter the pulpit—in vain we perſuade—we exhort—we beſeech—we reprove—we warn—or we invite;—the word will never come with a ſaving power, unleſs it "come in the Holy Ghoſt." A faithful addreſs to a guilty conſcience may make a Roman governor tremble; and, "the manifeſtation of the truth," may "*almoſt* perſuade a jewiſh monarch to become a "chriſtian;" but to bring a ſinner from "darkneſs to light "—to tranſlate him from the kingdom of Satan, into the "kingdom of God's dear Son"—to conſtitute thoſe who were "aliens from Iſrael, without hope and without God "in the world, fellow citizens with the ſaints and of the "houſhold of God," is a work, which it would be preſumption for an archangel to undertake; and can only be accompliſhed by him with whom "nothing is impoſſible." Our only encouragement to labor, and our only hope of ſucceſs, ariſe from the promiſe of God, and as a mean of enjoying it, the prayers of our people.—My dear brethren, you had better diſpoſe of your paſtor to ſome other church, unleſs you have a heart to pray for him.

2. If you would anſwer the end of ſuch a gift, *make your miniſter's work as eaſy to him as you can.* I do not mean by abridging the duties of his office, but by rendering him as eaſy, both in preparing for them, and engaging in them, as you are able. In proportion as his heart is in the work of God, ſo may that work be expected to proſper in his hand: it muſt be your care to prevent or remove, as much as poſſible, whatever might divert his mind from the immediate concerns of that relation in which he now ſtands to you; that, as the apoſtle adviſes Timothy, he may "give himſelf wholly to them," or liter-

ally *be in them:* For this purpoſe, two things eſpecial'y demand your concern.

(1.) That ſuch proviſion be made for his ſupport as may free his mind from all anxieties reſpecting his domeſtic affairs. For a miniſter to owe a bill which he cannot diſcharge, or to want a meal which he cannot obtain, is enough to turn his dwelling into a priſon, and will ſooner or later enervate his mind too much for ſtudious application at home, or vigorous efforts abroad.

The duty of miniſterial ſupport, is enforced in the ſcriptures with energetic plainneſs. "Do ye not know," ſaith the apoſtle, 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14, "that they which miniſter about holy things, live of the things of the temple? "And they who wait at the altar are partakers of the "altar? Even ſo HATH THE LORD ORDAINED, that "*they who preach the goſpel*, ſhould *live of the goſpel*;" and verſe 11, "If we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, "is it a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal things?"

Such language as this, convinces our judgments, whilſt it binds our conſcience:—it is the language, not merely of authority, but of juſtice; and, whilſt it forbids our diſobedience, it compels us to acknowledge, that to obey, is our *reaſonable* ſervice; eſpecially when we conſider, that had the man, who conſecrates himſelf to the good of this or that people, employed only the ſame powers in a mechanical or commercial line, he might have been as much their ſuperior in opulence, as he is now in theology.

It ill becomes a member of a chriſtian ſociety, to urge, as an apology for the ſcanty pittance of a paſtor, that he conſented to receive ſuch a ſtipend, when firſt he ſettled with his people:—Perhaps he did, and it might be enough

enough for his comfortable ſupport *then*, though it may be that both *his family* and the *expence* of *living*, have been *doubled ſince*. — Where ſuch men rule the affairs of a church, it is a comfort to reflect, that "GOD takes "care for oxen."

You, my brethren, know what is neceſſary to a miniſter's comfortable and reſpectable ſupport, in this city; and will take care to keep your miniſter free from any pecuniary embarraſſments.

(2.) You ſhould be careful not only to allow your miniſter an adequate ſupport, but muſt alſo, as far as poſſible, withhold yourſelves from any intruſions on his *time*.

Nothing, next to the honor of Chriſt, and the intereſt of ſouls, is ſo dear to a ſtudious paſtor, as time; and a miniſter who thinks lightly of its value, betrays an ignorance and indolence, which, if indulged, will eventually debaſe both his character and labors.

A ſtudious habit, as you have heard to-day, is eſſential to a ſtated miniſter. A lively imagination may ſerve an itinerant; but when a man becomes ſtationary, and preaches three or four times a week to the ſame people, unleſs he be induſtrious in furniſhing his mind, his ſervices will ſoon become inſipid, void of ſolidity, fraught with tautology, and unfit for edification. And what is the reſult? Why, the thoughtful hearers muſt either abide with diſſatisfaction, or in grief retire; whilſt the ignorant are kept in their ignorance, and remain babes, when, under a judicious miniſtry, they might have become "fathers in "Chriſt."

Am I not now ſpeaking to your paſtor? No, my brethren, he has had better advice than I can give him. I ſpeak

to

to *you.* I want to convince you that, for *your own ſake*, you ſhould promote a ſtudious habit in your miniſter: allow him every inch of time he wants: neither call upon him, nor expect him to call upon you for no better purpoſe than to goſſip; eſpecially let his *mornings* and his *Saturdays* be ſacred—it is little ſhort of cruelty to interrupt him then. As you love him, ſo, no doubt, you will feel a pleaſure in his company; but let him chooſe his own times for ſeeing you; and do not accuſe him of criminal negligence, if his viſits are leſs frequent than you expect: Perhaps at the very moment of your diſappointment, he was ſtudying ſomething againſt the Lord's-day for your caſe—perhaps at the moment that you are cenſuring him for his neglect, he is wreſtling with God for you in his cloſet!

If a paſtor devote thoſe hours to the theatre, the card-table, or the race-ground, which ought to be given to his people, God forbid I ſhould become his apologiſt; but to apologize for a ſtudious miniſter, is always juſt, and often neceſſary; ſuch an one, and ſuch only, will anſwer to the character of the predicted paſtor, who ſhould "feed his "flock with knowledge and underſtanding"—the paſtor "after God's own heart."

(3.) If you would improve the gift of a paſtor, *you muſt duly attend upon the ſacred ordinances that he adminiſters.* Without this, your profiting will be hardly poſſible. *Irregular attendance* will not only prevent your own improvement; but prove a pernicious example to others, and greatly diſcourage your miniſter. Painful indeed! when a man has been laboring a week to get food for the ſouls of his people, to ſee them turn their backs upon it when it is ſet before them; and, in effect, pronounce it unworthy their acceptance.

Nor ſhould you only avoid irregular, but *late* attendance alſo—a practice as diſgraceful to thoſe who are found in it,

as

as it is disturbing to the congregation on which they so unseasonably intrude themselves; and insulting to their Maker, on whose worship they set so little value, and whose authority they treat with so little reverence. The devotees of the world might, if these dilatory attendants on sacred ordinances were not lost to shame, put them to the blush. Look into places of amusement, my brethren, and long before the *bagatelles* of the evening begin to be exhibited, you will see the seats occupied, and the spectators waiting. O my God! how few, do the ministers of the sanctuary find thus waiting for thee! Say, my brethren, is it seemly that the God of this world should glory over the God of heaven; and say, 'my worshippers, are more faithful than thine!' and will you assist his triumphs?

With a few, a very few exceptions, I will venture to say, that *no just apology can be made for this indecent practice.* Have you families that require your attendance? Rise but a quarter of an hour sooner, and you will no longer find an inconvenience there. The excuses that are derived from *food* or *dress*, are so inconsistent with *sincere religion*, that to suppose them in a christian society would be absurd: the man who can neglect the honor of his God, and the interests of his soul, to gratify, either the interior or the exterior of his body, wants something more than argument to "turn him from idolatry, to serve the "living and true God."

Farther, public ordinances will be followed with little profit, unless you *seriously* attend to *ministerial instruction*, and *devoutly* engage in *divine worship*.

How unseemly, during the seasons of prayer or praise, to behold people staring about them with vacant countenances, which betray the indevotion of their hearts!

Brethren,

Brethren, I intreat that this may not be the caſe with you; nor ſhould you merely *attend to* the devotional parts of public ſervice, but *unite in* them. This is not the time for the exerciſe of a critical taſte; nor is the intercourſe of a rebel with his God, to be judged by the rules of ancient or modern oratory. Forget not, my brethren, that ſuch only worſhip God acceptably, who "worſhip him in ſpirit and "in truth."

And, how unſeemly for people to be gazing upon the congregation, whiſpering, ſmiling, or ſleeping, when the meſſages of ſalvation are delivered! Is it thus that criminals receive the news of pardon? Is it thus that ſubjects receive the mandates of their prince? Is it thus that chriſtians hear the goſpel of the Savior? Never, I ſincerely truſt, will your paſtor witneſs ſuch indecencies in you.

4. You cannot improve the gift of a paſtor, unleſs you *cordially embrace the truth he delivers, and yield to the juſt reproofs he may adminiſter, and the ſcriptural precepts he may enforce.*

Satisfied, as you have this day publicly profeſſed to be with his miniſtry, it is a warrantable preſumption that you conſider what he delivers as evangelic truth: but miniſterial wiſdom and fidelity, require much variety in the mode of repreſenting and enforcing it. In a congregation of any ſize, the circumſtances of the hearers will greatly vary. One may be living in habits of iniquity, whilſt he is careleſsly haſtening to everlaſting burnings—another may be diſtreſſed under recent awakenings—a third may want inſtruction about coming to Chriſt—a fourth may be ſtruggling with temptation—a fifth, burdened with heavy affliction—a ſixth may be rejoicing in the God of his ſalvation—a ſeventh may have defiled his garments, and by ſome

awful

awful crime, have brought a reproach on the religion he profeſſed. Now, amidſt this variety, is it poſſible for a miniſter, who is " to give to every man his portion of meat " in due ſeaſon," to be always inſiſting upon one topic, or aiming at one character only? And would it not be highly unreaſonable for an individual to complain, and ſay, ' My ' miniſter has neglected me to-day!' Give your miniſter credit for this, that, as he has had the moſt experience, ſo he muſt be the beſt judge of what is ſeaſonable; and rather water his miniſtry with your prayers, than blacken it by your complaints.

Should you, my brethren, when your miniſter is diſſecting the human character, diſcover ſome darling ſin in your boſom, hitherto concealed from your notice, be not offended at the preacher—he did not put it there. Of yourſelves be aſhamed—with yourſelves be offended—of your own heart ſay, " It is deſperately wicked;" but thank the honeſt man who diſcovered to you the viper, before it gave the mortal bite.

Strange it is that ſuch advice ſhould be neceſſary; but inſtances have occurred, and not a few, of perſons who have turned moſt bitter adverſaries to their miniſter—for what? only " for telling them the truth!" The love of deluſion is an ancient feature in the human character. " Prophefy ſmooth things," ſaid the people, " who would " not hear the *law of the Lord*; prophefy deceits:" the *falſe* prophets obeyed, and " the blind led the blind, until " both fell into the ditch."

There is one reflexion, bleſſed be God! that affords us habitual ſatisfaction. When we diſcharge our office with fidelity, we " manifeſt ourſelves to the *conſciences* of " men," although it frequently occaſion the loſs of their

affections

affections: But be aſſured, my brethren, that whether miniſterial fidelity be pleaſant or not, it will always be found profitable.

Give me the preacher who opens the folds of my heart; who accuſes me, convicts me, and condemns me before God; who loves my ſoul too well to ſuffer me to go on in ſin, unreproved, through fear of giving me offence; who draws the line with accuracy, between the deluſions of fancy, and the impreſſions of grace; who purſues me from one hiding place to another, until I am driven from every refuge of lies; who gives me no reſt until he ſees me, with unfeigned penitence, trembling at the feet of Jeſus; and then, and not till then, ſooths my anguiſh, wipes away my tears, and comforts me with the cordials of grace.

Give me the preacher "who conſtantly affirms that "they who have believed, be careful to maintain good "works;" who inſiſts, that a life of peace and communion with God, is utterly abhorrent to the practice of iniquity; and faithfully reminds me, that "if I ſin, that grace may "abound, my damnation is juſt."

Give me the preacher who pants not for my ſafety only, but alſo for my *increaſe in grace*; who cautions me, "reproves me, rebukes me, exhorts me with all long-ſuf-"fering and doctrine;" who charges me "to give all di-"ligence to add to my faith, virtue; and to virtue, "knowlege; and to knowlege, temperance; and to tem-"perance, patience; and to patience, godlineſs; and to "godlineſs, brotherly kindneſs; and to brotherly kindneſs, "charity." Brethren, if Chriſt have given you ſuch a man as this, receive him as an angel from heaven; and prize ſuch a paſtor as one of the moſt valuable gifts that can be imparted to the church.

What

What are we better than meteors, my brethren, if we only catch the eye of tranſient admiration? May you find in your paſtor a more permanent and influential luminary! As the rays of the ſun penetrate the frozen earth, looſen the clods, and call forth the verdure, the beauty, and the fruitfulneſs of the plant—ſo, beneath the divine bleſſing, may the faithful diſcourſes of our brother ſink into your hearts, detach them from the embraces of the world, and cauſe you to be fruitful in every good and work.

He who ſends his hearer away with mere admiration of the ſpeaker, doth nothing; he that ſends him away with admiration of himſelf, doth worſe than nothing; but he that ſends him away penetrated with conviction, ſelf-accuſed, ſelf-abhorred, crying for mercy to pardon his guilt, and grace to ſanctify his polluted heart;—that preacher, or rather God by him, hath done much—" he hath turned a " ſinner from the error of his way"—he " ſhall be had in " everlaſting remembrance."

To what end do I make theſe remarks? For this end, my brethren, that the more faithful your paſtor is, the more you may honor him as a man of principle, and prize him, as one of all men the moſt likely to do you good.

You will find it neceſſary, not only to guard *yourſelves* againſt entertaining any unbecoming ſentiments of your miniſter; but alſo to diſcountenance every appearance of it in others: for one complaining, diſſatisfied member in a religious ſociety, if encouraged by the reſt, will be like the poiſon in the blood, or the leaven in the meal, which ſecretly but effectually inſinuates itſelf, until the whole maſs be contaminated. " Mark them," ſays the apoſtle, " who " cauſe diviſions among you, and avoid them; for they

"gratify their own paſſions, but ſerve not our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt." Such perſons will aſſume the ſpirit of zeal, and pretend a concern for truth, but "by their fruits ye "ſhall know them;" and when they are diſcovered, unleſs they give the ſincereſt proofs of penitence, let them be put from the church, as the leper from the camp, leſt they defile all who come near them.

Reflect, my brethren, of how much importance it is for *each one* of you to "ſtudy the things that make for "peace, and things whereby ye may edify one another." What is an unworthy member of a chriſtian ſociety? What, but a blotch upon the face of beauty—a bramble in a garden of lilies! O that each of you may be preſerved from disfiguring or diſgracing the church of God!

You muſt not only be concerned to avoid diſhonoring the church, but to be growingly ornamental to it. Moſt juſtly doth the apoſtle repreſent one end of miniſterial inſtruction, by the effects of the continual nouriſhment, and the foſtering care of a tender nurſe upon the body of a healthy child. Chriſt, ſaith he, "hath given paſtors and "teachers, that ye may *grow* up unto a perfect man—to "the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt." You ſee, brethren, *Chriſt* is the ſtandard of chriſtian maturity. Before we are "born from above," we are all in the likeneſs of the firſt, the fallen Adam: In regeneration we are formed anew, but we are brought forth babes, and our character is imperfect: Every gradation from a reſemblance of the firſt Adam, to the likeneſs of the ſecond, is adding another cubit to our ſpiritual ſtature; but we ſhall never be perfect men, until we attain to "the *fulneſs* of "Chriſt," and for that we muſt wait till "we ſee him as "he is." In this world there is always room to advance; let

let us then be going on to perfection, and ſo receive "the "ſincere milk of the word, as to grow thereby." O what a heaven on earth would that church be, all whoſe members were thus "growing up unto the head, even Chriſt;" or to follow the apoſtle in a figure of greater boldneſs, and not leſs expreſſion, "forgetting the things that are behind, "and reaching forth to thoſe which are before, were "preſſing towards the mark for the prize of their high "calling of God, in Chriſt Jeſus!"

Let Greece pour forth from all her cities, to gaze on the Olympian conteſts—with ſuperior ſatisfaction would I fix my eyes on ſuch a ſcene as this; and, pointing to the holy company, addreſs each heedleſs paſſenger and ſay, "Behold! ſo run they not as uncertainly—ſo contend they "not as thoſe who beat the air—they ſtrive not for a cor-"ruptible crown, but an incorruptible, a crown of righte-"ouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous judge, ſhall give "them in that day." O, my brethren, *ſtrive* to be the moſt zealous, the moſt affectionate, the moſt holy people in all the world. "Let your profiting appear unto all "men;" then alſo ſhall your teacher, with pious tranſport exclaim, "I have not run in vain, nor labored in vain."

5. The laſt thing I would recommend to you in order to improve the gift of Chriſt, is to render him as *extenſive a bleſſing* as you can. He is given by Chriſt "to "edify," that is, to *build* the church of God, to put more ſtones into the ſacred edifice, that the ſuperſtructure may riſe until it become a compleat temple for the Lord.

The enlargement of the church univerſal, is the wiſh of every chriſtian, and the increaſe of a particular chriſtian ſociety, ought to be purſued by each member of it: But ſeek not, my brethren, to augment your congregation

at the expence of others. Few that are ſeduced to a new communion, prove for any length of time a comfort or an honor to it. "Covet not," therefore, in this ſenſe, "any "thing that is your neighbors;" and do nothing in relation to another evangelic congregation, which you would not approve in the conduct of that congregation to you. There are, indeed, ſome caſes where the admiſſion of members from other communions is juſt; but would it not be proper, in ſuch caſes, to take no ſteps whatever until the perſons who make the application, be referred to their former miniſter, that he may have an opportunity of ſerious converſation with them upon the ſubject, before they deſert him? Such an open, generous conduct, would, I ſhould hope, prevent thoſe party feuds and jealouſies, which have too often been the diſgrace and the torment of chriſtian ſocieties, whoſe great aim ſhould have been to "walk in love," and to "ſtrive together for the faith of the goſpel."

If we may judge of future affection among the churches of Chriſt in this city, by the ſingular circumſtances of the preſent day, we may warmly congratulate you on the opening proſpect. It is not a common caſe for a miniſter to be ordained over one congregation, in the houſe belonging to another in the ſame town. In ſome inſtances, indeed, it has not been neceſſary; but in others, too often the one have been too haughty to aſk, or the other too unkind to grant. With joy I contemplate *all you*, my brethren, as riſing above the government of theſe unlovely tempers; and moſt ſincerely do I pray, that you may ever conſider yourſelves as members but of one family, though you find it convenient to occupy different apartments.

Whence then ſhall you ſeek for additions? From whence your Lord directs you—from the highways and hedges—from the unawakened, the careleſs, the prophane:

By

By the awakening, the enlightening, the renewing of ſuch as theſe, ſeek to build up that part of the church to which you particularly belong. Look into your families; are there none of this deſcription there? Reflect on the character of your neighbors—are there none among them? Theſe are the perſons, whom, by every affectionate perſuaſion, you muſt "compel to come in, that the Lord's "houſe may be filled."

"Invite the ſtrangers all around
"Your pious march to join,
"And ſpread the ſentiments you feel
"Of faith and love divine."

Encourage your miniſter in going among the neighboring villages; get houſes opened and regiſtered for him to preach in; uſe your influence in bringing perſons to hear; countenance him by your attendance, when he makes theſe evangelical excurſions; and when, either at home or abroad, you perceive perſons affected under the word, ſpeak to them, introduce them to the miniſter, encourage their attendance, comfort them under the perſecutions to which they may be expoſed for the ſake of religion; and finally, ſhould they decidedly appear renewed perſons, and be deſirous of partaking with you of the privileges of church-fellowſhip, let no unneceſſary, no unſcriptural delay, prevent their admiſſion to the table of the Lord. Thus will you hold up the hands of your paſtor, become bleſſings both to the church and to the world, and prove that you have not received the gift of Chriſt in vain.

Finally, "If there be any conſolation in Chriſt; if any "fellowſhip of the ſpirit; if any comfort of love; if any "bowels and mercies, fulfil ye your paſtor's joy:" that beholding your rapid improvement in every amiable temper,

and

and chriſtian grace; ſeeing your "love and your zeal "abounding yet more and more, in knowlege and in all "judgment," and yourſelves "filled with the fruits of "righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the glory "and praiſe of God," he may have increaſing reaſon to join the happy and affectionate apoſtle in ſaying, "What "is my hope? What is my joy? What is my crown of "rejoicing? Are not even *ye* in the preſence of the Lord "Jeſus Chriſt at his coming?"

Note

Note to p. 61.

IT is matter of juſt lamentation, that ſo many profeſſing chriſtians ſeem to think, that contribution towards the ſupport of a miniſter, exempts them from all obligation to perſonal activity in promoting the intereſts of religion in the world. To the ſerious conſideration of ſuch profeſſors, the following expoſtulation of the pious Mr. R. Baxter, is affectionately ſubmitted.

" O, if you have the hearts of chriſtians or of men in you, let them yearn towards your poor, ignorant, ungodly neighbors. Alas! there is but a ſtep betwixt them and death and hell; and if they die unregenerate, they are loſt for ever. Have you hearts of rock, that cannot pity men in ſuch a caſe as this? If you believe not the word of God, and the danger of ſinners, why are you chriſtians yourſelves? If you do believe it, why do you not beſtir you to the helping of others? Do you not care who is damned, ſo you be ſaved? If ſo, you have as much cauſe to pity yourſelves; for it is a frame of ſpirit utterly inconſiſtent with grace. But hath God had much mercy on you, and will you have no mercy on your poor neighbors? You need not go far to find objects for your pity: Look but into your ſtreets, or into the next houſe to you, and you will probably find ſome. Have you never an ignorant, an unregenerate neighbor, that ſets his heart below, and neglecteth eternity? O what bleſſed place do you live in where there is none ſuch! If there be not ſome of them in thine own family, it is well; and yet art thou ſilent? Doſt thou live cloſe by them, or labor with them, or travel with them, or ſit ſtill and talk with them, and ſay nothing to them of their ſouls, or the life to come? If their houſes were on fire, thou wouldeſt run and help them, and wilt thou not help them when their ſouls are almoſt at the fire of hell? If thou kneweſt but a remedy for their bodily diſeaſes thou would'ſt tell it them, or elſe thou would'ſt judge thyſelf guilty of their death;—what ſhall we ſay then of them who know of the remedy for curing ſouls, and do not reveal it, and perſuade men to make uſe of it! Is it not hypocriſy to pray daily for their converſion and ſalvation, and never once endeavor to procure it? Alas! that your prayers and your practice ſhould ſo much diſagree! How forward are hypocrites in their ſacrifice, and how backward to ſhew mercy! how forward to cenſure miniſters for neglecting their duties; yea, to expect more from one miniſter

minister than ten can perform, and yet they make no conscience of neglecting their own; as if other men were to work, and they only to sit by and judge!

Look christians, with an eye of compassion, on the ignorant, ungodly sinners about you: Be not like the priest and levite, that saw the man wounded, and passed by. God did not so pass by you when it was your own case. Are not the souls of your neighbors fallen into the hands of Satan? Doth not their misery cry out to you Help! Help! As you have any compassion towards men in the greatest misery, Help! As you have the hearts of men, and not of tigers in you, Help!"

SAINT'S REST, Part III. Chap. xiv. § 1.

ERRATA.

P. 21, line 24, for BY TIMES, read BETIMES.
P. 29, line 3, for OCCURED, read OCCURRED.
In p. 52 dele the () from part 3.

FINIS.